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THE  
REDUCTION  
OF  
EPISCOPACIE

Unto the Form of  
Synodical Government

Received in the  
ANTIEN T CHURCH:

Proposed as an Expedient for the compremising  
of the now Differences, and the preventing of those  
Troubles that may arise about the matter of  
CHURCH-GOVERNMENT.

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By J A: Usher, *Armachanus.*

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And now published, seriously to be considered by all sober  
conscientious Persons, and rendred to all the Sons of Peace and  
Truth in the three Nations, for recovering the Peace  
of the Church, and setting its proper Government.

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*Tolle jam nominis crimen, & nihil restat nisi criminis nomen, Tert:*  
*Apol.*

*Contra rationem nemo sobrius; contra Scripturam nemo Christianus;*  
*contra Ecclesiam nemo pacificus senseris, Aug de Trin.*

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at the Middle Temple Gate, 1656.

THE  
OFFICE OF THE  
SECRETARY OF THE  
NAVY  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

And now, I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst., in relation to the above subject, and to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,  
Your obedient servant,  
[Signature]

## Episcopal and Presbyterial Govern- ment conjoyned.

**B**Y Order of the Church of *England* all Presbyters are charged<sup>a</sup> to minister the Doctrine and Sacraments, and the Discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded, and as this Realm hath received the same; and that they might the better understand what the Lord had commanded therein<sup>b</sup>, the Exhortation of *S. Paul* to the Elders of the Church of *Ephesus* is appointed to be read unto them at the time of their Ordination; *Take heed unto your selves, and to all the flock, among whom the Holy Ghost hath made you Overseers; to Rule the Congregation of God, which he hath purchased with his blood.*

<sup>a</sup> The form of Ordaining of Ministers.

<sup>b</sup> Ibid. ex A. 20. 17, 28.

<sup>\*</sup> Ποιμαίνετε, so taken in Mat. 2. 6. and Apoc. 12. 5. & 19. 15.

Of the many Elders, who in common thus ruled the Church of *Ephesus*, there was one President; Whom our Saviour in his Epistle to that Church in a peculiar manner stileth<sup>c</sup> the Angel of the Church of *Ephesus*; and *Ignatius*, in another Epistle written about twelve years after unto the same Church, calleth the Bishop thereof, betwixt which Bishop and the Presbytery of that Church, what an harmonious consent there was in the ordering of the Church-government, the same *Ignatius* doth fully there declare, by Presbytery with<sup>d</sup> *S. Paul* understanding the Company of the rest of the Presbyters or Elders, who then had a hand not onely in the delivery of the Doctrine and Sacraments, but also in the

<sup>c</sup> Rev. 2. 1.

<sup>d</sup> 1 Tim. 4. 14.



*Ibidem* etiam administration of the Discipline of Christ, for further exhortationes, proof whereof, we have that known testimony of castigationes & censura divina; *Tertullian* in his Apology for Christians.  
nam & judica-

tur magno cum pondere ut apud certos de Dei conspectu, summumq; futuri iudicii prejudicium est, si quis ita deliquit, ut à communicatione orationis & conventus & omnis sancti commercii relegatur: presidenti probati quique seniores, honorem istum non pretio sed Testimonio adepti. *Tertul.* Apolog. cap. 39.

In the Church are used exhortations, chastisements, and divine censure. For judgement is given with great advice, as among those who are certain they are in the sight of God; and it is the chiefest foreshewing of the judgement which is to come, if any man have so offended that he be banished from the Communion of Prayer, and of the Assembly, and of all holy fellowship. The Presidents that bear rule therein are certain approved Elders, who have obtained this honour, not by reward, but by good report; who were no other (as he himself elsewhere intimateth) but those from whose hands they used to receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist. For with the Bishop who was the chief President, (and therefore stiled by the same *Tertullian* in another place & *Summus Sacerdos* for distinction sake) the rest of the Dispensers of the Word and Sacraments joyned in the common government of the Church; and therefore, where in matters of Ecclesiastical judicature, *Cornelius* Bishop of *Rome* used the received form of gathering together the Presbytery; of what persons that did consist, *Cyprian* sufficiently declareth, when he wisheth him to read his letters to the flourishing Clergy which there did preside or rule with him; the presence of the Clergy being thought to be so requisite in matters of Episcopal audience, that

*Nec de aliorum  
monibus quam  
presidentium  
summus, Id. de  
corona militis,  
cap. 3.  
Dandi quidem  
Baptismi habet  
jus summus sa-  
cerdos, qui est E-  
piscopus, dehinc  
Presbyteri &  
Diaconi. Id. de  
Bapt. cap. 17.  
In Omni actu ad  
me perlato pla-  
cuit contrahi  
Presbyterium,  
Cornel. apud  
Cyp. ep. 45.  
In florentissimo  
illic clero te cum  
presidentii, Cyp.  
ep. 55. ad Cor-  
n. l.*

that in the fourth Council of *Carthage*, it was concluded, <sup>k</sup> That the Bishop might hear no mans cause without the presence of his Clergy, and that otherwise the Bishops sentence should be void, unless it were confirmed by the presence of the Clergy, which we find also to be inserted into the Canons of <sup>l</sup> *Egbert*, who was Archbishop of *York* in the Saxons times, and afterwards into the Body of the <sup>m</sup> Canon Law it self.

*k* Ut Episcopus nullius causam audiat absque praesentia Clericorum suorum, alioquin irrita erit sententia Episcopi nisi clericorum praesentia confirmetur, Conc. carthag. 4. cap. 23.  
*l* Excerptio. *Egberti* cap. 43.  
*m* 15. q. 7. cap. Nullus.

True it is, that in our Church this kind of Presbyterial government hath bin long dis-used, yet seeing it still professeth, that every Pastor hath a right to rule the Church (from whence the name of Rector also was given at first unto him) and to administer the Discipline of Christ, as well as to dispence the Doctrine and Sacraments, and the restraint of the exercise of that right proceedeth onely from the custome now received in this Realm, no man can doubt but by another Law of the Land this Hindrance may be well removed: And how easily this ancient form of government by the united Suffrages of the Clergy might be revived again, and with what little shew of alteration, the Synodical conventions of the Pastors of every Parish might be accorded with the presidency of the Bishops of each Diocess and Province; the indifferent Reader may quickly perceive by the perusal of the ensuing Propositions.

I.

In every Parish the Rector or Incumbent Pastor, together with the Churchwardens and Sidesmen may every week take notice of such as live scandalously

The Parochial government answerable to the Church Session in Scotland.

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in that Congregation, who are to receive such severall admonitions and reproofs, as the quality of their offence shall deserve; and if by this means they cannot be reclaimed, they may be presented unto the next monethly Synod; and in the mean time debarred by the Pastor from access to the Lords Table.

## II.

The Presbyteriall monethly Synods, answer to the Scottish Presbyteries or Ecclesiastical meetings.

Whereas by a Statute in the 26 year of King Henry the eight (revived in the first of Queen Elizabeth) Suffragans are appointed to be created in twenty six severall places of this Kingdom, the number of them might very well be conformed unto the number of the severall rural Deanries into which every Diocess is subdivided; which being done, the Suffragan (supplying the place of those who in the ancient Church were called *Chorepiscopi*) might every moneth assemble a Synod of all the Rectors, or Incumbent Pastors within the Precinct, and according to the Major part of their voices conclude all matters that should be brought into debate before them.

To this Synod the Rector and Churchwardens might present such impenitent persons, as by admonition and suspension from the Sacrament, would not be reformed; who if they should still remain contumacious and incorrigible, the sentence of Excommunication might be decreed against them by the Synod, and accordingly be executed in the Parish where they lived.

Hitherto also all things that concerned the Parochiall



(7)

chiall Ministers might be referred, whether they did touch their doctrine or their conversation; as also the censure of all new Opinions, Heresies, or Schismes, which did arise within that Circuit; with liberty of Appeal, if need so require, unto the Diocesan Synod.

### III.

The Diocesan Synod might be held once or twice in the year, as it should be thought most convenient: Therein all the Suffragans and the rest of the Rectors or Incumbent Pastors (or a certain select number) of every Deanry within that Diocess might meet, with whose consent, or the Major part of them, all things might be concluded by the Bishop or Superintendent (call him whither you will) or in his absence by one of the Suffragans whom he shall depute in his stead to be Moderator of that Assembly.

Diocesan Synods answerable to the Provinciall Synods in Scotland.

Here all matters of greater moment might be taken into consideration, and the Orders of the Monethly Synods revised, and (if need be) reformed: And if here also any matters of difficulty could not receive a full determination; it might be referred to the next Provinciall or National Synod.

### IV.

The Provincial Synod might consist of all the Bishops and Suffragans, and such other of the Clergy as should be elected out of every Diocess within the Province; The Primate of either Province might

might be Moderator of this meeting (or in his room  
some one of the Bishops appointed by him) and all  
matters be ordered therein by common consent as in  
the former Assembly.

The Provinci-  
all and Nation-  
al Synod an-  
swerable to  
the General  
assembly in  
Scotland.

This Synod might be held every third year, and  
if the Parliament do then sit (according to the Act  
for a Triennial Parliament) both the Primate and  
Provinciall Synods of the Land might joyn together,  
and make up a National Council: Wherein all ap-  
peals from inferior Synods might be received, all  
their Acts examined, and all Ecclesiasticall consti-  
tutions which concern the state of the Church of the  
whole Nation established.

**F I N I S**  
**T**he Form of Government here proposed, is not  
in any point repugnant to the Scriptures, and char-  
the Suffragans mentioned in the second Proposition,  
may lawfully use the power both of jurisdiction and  
ordination, according to the Word of God, and the  
Practise of the ancient Church.

The Provincial Synod might consist of all the Bi-  
shops and Suffragans, and such other of the Clergy  
as should be elected out of every Diocese within  
the Province: The Primate of either Province